

*Supply*

spokespersons of the two official opposition parties probably earlier in that day on the Monday.

to help the lot of farmers, to help them face the challenge that is before them right now and it is a very difficult one.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### WAYS AND MEANS

#### TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 84(1), I have the honour to lay upon the table copies of the notice of ways and means motion to amend the Excise Tax Act and related acts, and I ask that pursuant to Standing Order 84(2) an Order of the Day be designated for consideration of said motion.

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### SUPPLY

#### ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 81—AGRICULTURE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Althouse (p. 2361).

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James):** Mr. Speaker, so far, on this particular motion, I think we have had a very good debate. It has been quite stimulating and somewhat illuminating. I must say that to some extent I have mixed feelings about the motion. On the one hand I wish that it were not necessary to have this kind of debate. If things were not so difficult down on the farm, I guess we could be dealing with some other matters, talking about some other important issues. So that is on the negative side.

On the positive side, I welcome this motion. I welcome the debate around it because the motion reflects something that was already done some days ago near the end of August in a meeting of our Standing Committee on Agriculture. What we did was pass a motion almost identical to the one that is before us now. What is so encouraging about that is we had all-party support for that motion in the Standing Committee on Agriculture. It would be very encouraging if the same thing happened here in the House of Commons because, after all, the purpose of this motion and the purpose of this debate is

The hon. Minister for Grains and Oilseeds has already indicated that the government will not be supporting this motion. I find that discouraging and I will tell you why. I think what it does is it sends mixed signals to the agricultural community. On the one hand we go out of our way to listen to the farmers and hear what they say, to recognize the terrible problems that they face. Yet, when it comes to a motion like this which, in effect, says there is a problem out there and it has to be addressed right now, the hon. minister of grains and oilseeds says: "I cannot support that."

Now the minister says he cannot support it because of rules of the House and rules according to parliamentary procedures that go way back to Runnymede, hundreds and hundreds of years ago. But the fact of the matter is that the motion points out and really says, on behalf of the House, that if it is passed it is in no way an expression of non-confidence in the government. So I cannot see, for the life of me, why the government cannot support the motion. It does send a mixed signal to the farming community.

Now there are other mixed signals too, distressing signals that I want to point out. For example, the important issue, the issue that is concentrating the minds of farmers at this moment has to do with emergency assistance.

Yesterday, in the House, I said to the hon. Minister of Agriculture that we do not need any more information as to what has gone on in the past few months. We do not need any information with respect to what farmers might expect under the safety net programs GRIP and NISA. We have that information already. What we do not have is what the government is going to do in the way of emergency aid, that is what we are looking for and that is the information that we want. Yet, the Minister of Agriculture, yesterday, refused to deal with that question.

I must say, and again it is discouraging, that the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds stood up in the House today and he spoke for a long time, 20 minutes or more, and hardly addressed this matter of emergency assistance except to say that he recognizes the problem, he